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New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by The Right Honourable Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor General of Tuvalu

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Governor General of Tuvalu.

Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor General of Tuvalu, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency The Right Honourable Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor General of Tuvalu, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Sir Tomasi Puapua (Tuvalu): Proud as we are that our small island nation of Tuvalu is a member of this great family of nations, first we must give thanks to God Almighty for his love and for allowing us all to participate in this general debate. Let me also extend my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Government of our host country, the United States of America, for its warm hospitality and support.

Tuvalu warmly congratulates you, Sir, on your election to the high office and commends highly the outgoing President for his leadership, especially during a very challenging year for the Organization. Tuvalu also wishes to reaffirm its strong confidence in the Secretary-General. In addition, we warmly congratulate Switzerland on its entry into the United Nations, and we welcome membership of East Timor later on in this session.

Tuvalu sincerely joins, both in spirit and hearts, in the remembrance of the great loss, particularly of innocent human lives, following the terrorist attacks on American soil last year. We pray for the victims' families and for full recovery in restoring their lives. Within our own Organization, we are proud that of this turmoil the United Nations has come out ever stronger with the resolve to combat international terrorism.

In Tuvalu and many island countries in the Pacific, we know our own unique vulnerability is also fertile ground to forces of terror that threaten the security and survival of the islands. It is in this regard that Tuvalu is committed to the Pacific Islands Forum Declarations on regional security, highlighted in the Forum Communiqué, which is circulated as a United Nations paper. In the same spirit, last year Tuvalu pledged its commitment to the United Nations anti-terrorism resolutions, and we still do. But we also need both technical and financial assistance from the international community to enable us to fulfil our international obligations.

Joining and being part of the United Nations is never easy, particularly for a small and poorly resourced island country such as Tuvalu. Asserting our place here competes with the many other priorities of nation-building. However, our presence here is proof of our belief all along since our independence that, through the United Nations principle of equal participation, our voice on our security and development concerns will be advocated and better heard.

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Although new, Tuvalu supports the reforms being undertaken in the Organization to streamline and ensure efficiency. In particular, it supports initiatives that have been developed on reforms in the Security Council and in the work of the Secretariat, and it is our strong view that they warrant proper support. It is also our view that equitable representation more reflective of the diversity in the United Nations membership, both in the staffing of United Nations Secretariat and in its various working committees, needs to be properly considered.

As a peace-loving nation, Tuvalu believes that the paramount mission of the United Nations must remain the maintenance of peace and security for all nations of the world, as clearly articulated in the preamble to the United Nations Charter. However, a long outstanding issue that also warrants serious consideration is the question of the Republic of China on Taiwan. This country has a population of 23 million people, a well-defined territory and an established democratic system of Government, and is a responsible international actor in world trade and relations. It is, therefore, our strong opinion that the right to self-determination of the people of the Republic of China and to join the United Nations should be urgently addressed. The United Nations cannot be said to be universal, nor can global peace be assured, until the Republic of China issue is properly resolved.

As we progress in the new century, however, we are increasingly challenged by the many changes that are taking place. Never before has the human race faced such complex challenges. We are in a world where the concept of globalization is in the media every day. Yet while we share a world where trade, communications and travel appear to have made us a single global community, large parts of the world continue to suffer from poverty, marginalization and environmental decline. We are far from being a cohesive global community. Unfortunately, Tuvalu and many small island developing States are in a particularly weak position to participate fully and take advantage of the opportunities of globalization. There is a genuine need for special assistance to enhance our capacity in this regard.

On the issue of conflict prevention, Tuvalu, like other vulnerable small island nations, is particularly weary of conflicts and wars. It is our humble view that, all too often, countries seem compelled to resort to military and violent action in order to resolve conflicts rather than seek to understand the root causes of these conflicts. We strongly feel this approach needs careful reconsideration. The build-up of arms and massive expenditure on so-called defence completely overshadow all efforts to resolve the underlying causes of poverty, unrest and instability. For us to survive as an international community we must reverse this trend. We must also learn to listen to each other.

In this respect, Tuvalu firmly believes that we must place greater faith in the United Nations as the forum for meaningfully addressing poverty, conflicts and instability and the effects of environmental degradation. It is here, in the common house of the human family, where countries should come, put down their arms, listen to each other and resolve their differences together. We believe that this is the only way forward to ensuring long-lasting world peace, security and sustainable development.

Tuvalu agrees with the importance of sustainable development and subscribes to the goals espoused in the Millennium Declaration, particularly those on poverty eradication. It also welcomes the holding of the United Nations international conferences, including, those on the rights of the child, financing for development and the review of the implementation of Agenda 21 through the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In addition, Tuvalu also appreciates commitments made recently to replenish the Global Environment Facility (GEF), so vitally important to many countries, especially to Small Island Developing States.

However, while Tuvalu appreciates the considerations for small island developing States in the various processes, we appeal for more concrete recognition, particularly by the donor community, of our special case so that we can cope with the challenges that we face, particularly with regards to capacity-building through quality education and health, access to fresh water and affordable energy, infrastructures and sanitation. Without additional and adequate resources, partnership initiatives arising from those processes will have no real meaning, especially for those groups that are most in need, such as women, children and people in rural and outer island areas.

It need not be repeated, but for Tuvalu, development aid is indispensable to development. For us, official development assistance (ODA) is the development budget. The maintenance of vital services

to our people through innovative partnerships, such as the Tuvalu Trust Fund, for example, would not have been possible without ODA. I would like at this juncture to acknowledge with great sincerity Tuvalu's appreciation of all its development partners, particularly our traditional donors, old and new, such as Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Japan, the European Union and the Republic of China on Taiwan.

For our part, having progressed as a sovereign nation with relative peace and stability over the past twenty-four years, Tuvalu is strongly committed to the United Nations principle of good governance. The recently elected Government of Tuvalu is fully committed to the principles of good governance, democracy and respect for the rule of law. It is also committed to accountability and transparency, in harmony with Christian values and traditional and cultural norms. As in the past, we are also committed to the prudent management of finances and to further work on reforms to improve our systems.

Tuvalu is surrounded by the huge Pacific Ocean and is well aware, both of its rights to its vast marine resources and also of its responsibility to ensure the proper and sustainable management of the potentials of the ocean. We therefore fully associate ourselves with the Pacific Islands Forum's Regional Ocean Policy recently adopted by our leaders.

Finally, peace, security and long-term livelihood for the world will have no meaning to us in Tuvalu in the absence of serious actions to address the adverse and devastating effects of global warming. At no more than three meters above sea level, Tuvalu is particularly exposed to those effects. Indeed our people are already migrating to escape. We are already suffering from the consequences of what world authorities on climate change have consistently been warning us. Only two weeks ago, a period when the weather was normal and calm and the tide was low, unusually big waves suddenly crashed ashore and flooded most parts of the capital island.

In the event that the situation is not reversed, where does the international community think the Tuvalu people can hide from the onslaught of sea-level rise? Taking us in as environmental refugees is not what Tuvalu is after in the long run. We want the islands of Tuvalu and our nation to remain permanently and not to be submerged as a result of the greed and uncontrolled consumption of industrialized countries. We want our children to grow up the way we grew up in our own islands and in our own culture.

We once again appeal to the industrialized countries, particularly those who have not done so, to urgently ratify and to fully implement the Kyoto Protocol and to provide concrete support in all our adaptation efforts to cope with the effects of climate change and sea-level rise. Tuvalu, having little or nothing to do with the causes, cannot be left on its own to pay the price. We must all work together. May God bless you all, and God bless the United Nations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Governor-General of Tuvalu for the statement he has just made.

The Right Honourable Sir Tomasi Puapua, Governor-General of Tuvalu, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: I give the floor to Her Excellency Mrs. Lydie Polfer, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Luxembourg.

Mrs. Polfer (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): The current Chairman of the European Union, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, has already had an opportunity to state to the Assembly the priorities and positions of the European Union. Luxembourg, through its commitment on a day-to-day basis, reaffirms its dedication to multilateral cooperation and to the work of this universal Organization.

President Kavan, you assumed your important post through a new procedure designed to revitalize the work of the General Assembly and intensify its impact. I am sure that under your guidance we will achieve other significant successes.

Mr. Han Seung-soo guided the work of the previous session during a period when the international situation was difficult and beset by serious problems. Thanks to his extensive experience and his understanding of international issues, a calm and fraternal message of cooperation and concerted action resulted from our debates. We all are deeply grateful to him for that.

Our Organization also has the advantage of having a Secretary-General whose humanism and outstanding diplomatic skills are universally acknowledged. He has begun his second term with his characteristic dynamism, which we all admire.

We wholeheartedly support the Secretary-General in the discharge of his important mission. There is no doubt that multilateralism and the support of the United Nations system for it have their own particular dynamic. We are counting on him to guide the Organization in accordance with the guidelines set out in the important statement he made last Thursday.

Regarding Iraq, we believe that the international community must continue to work through the United Nations, which is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security. Iraq must provide unconditional and unimpeded access to the inspectors as well as the necessary cooperation. It must fulfil its obligations immediately. We are determined to support the efforts of the United Nations to achieve that goal.

International law was strengthened considerably with the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on 1 July last. This represents a major step forward in the process of the promotion of the rule of law and in the fight against impunity. This young institution must receive our full support. Indeed, it represents a guarantee in terms of the desire for protection, which is so deeply rooted in each of us. The broadest possible ratification of the Statute of the Court must remain a high-priority objective of the international community. The European Union is actively working to that end to ensure that the Court is genuinely universal in nature.

In the same multilateral context, the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development has just concluded with the observation that our planet's natural reserves and resources are limited and that only solidarity can reconcile the legitimacy of development and the preservation of an environment that respects life. It is humankind's responsibility to achieve a balance in these two cases.

The Summit charted a course through the Plan of Implementation, which sets out objectives and timetables. Some may feel that they are not ambitious enough, but they certainly can guide us. We need to implement this plan, and here new partnerships between the United Nations, Governments, companies and civil society are an important tool. Governments, however, still must shoulder all of their responsibilities.

In Doha, the World Trade Organization decided to link the opening of markets and technical assistance to development. In Monterrey, a global consensus emerged regarding financing for development. In the wake of Johannesburg, there is a need now to create synergetic relationships between public assistance, support from companies, local resources and the commitment of non-governmental organizations. Poverty, pollution, overexploitation and, unfortunately, violence, too, will continue for a long time to fuel pessimism.

However, we are encouraged to note that democracy and good governance are concepts and practices that are moving forward and that are increasingly broadly accepted. In this context, I should like to pay tribute to the young African Union, which specifically included among its objectives the advancement of the principles of democracy and its corollary, the protection of human rights.

Human rights, democracy, development and security are closely linked. The Council of Europe, whose principal mission is the championing of human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law, has, like the United Nations, had to face an tremendous challenge following the events of 11 September. Like this universal Organization, the Council of Europe, whose chairmanship Luxembourg has held since May — its tenure is for a six-month period — has taken a series of specific measures in the international campaign against terrorism.

In addition to advancing the process of the signing and ratification of international instruments, the Council has devised guidelines for an international campaign that includes full respect for human rights. Indeed, when security is threatened, respect for human rights becomes all the more important. As statesmen, it is our obligation to prevent anti-terrorist legislation from infringing on, or even destroying, democracy in its attempt to champion the fundamental values of freedom and to safeguard human rights.

The events of 11 September provided a new impetus, as we all are well aware, to cooperation between institutional partners and, above all, emphasized the need to pursue dialogue between cultures and religions and to step up the process of reflection on civilizations in order to promote tolerance

and universal respect for human rights when we are faced with barbarism. Like the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Council of Europe is committed to that policy.

Coordination and complementarity between regional and international organizations are, moreover, among those priorities that Luxembourg has set for its chairmanship. It might thus be useful to establish links here with the important centres of the Council of Europe, namely the European Court of Human Rights — a unique mechanism for the protection of human rights; the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance; and, finally, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture. It is indeed my hope that the important work on norms and standards carried out by the Committee at the European level will one day be implemented at the international level, and that the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Torture — a Protocol that the Assembly will soon be called on to endorse — will enjoy the same success as its European predecessor. The establishment of the rule of law for all of us is an objective for which the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson worked tirelessly. She deserves our gratitude for her courage and her contribution to this vital cause. Her successor, Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, can also count on our full cooperation and support.

The special session of the General Assembly on the rights of children in May 2002 allowed us, once again, to condemn that indifference which kills and causes great suffering to millions of disadvantaged and defenceless individuals. While the Convention on the Rights of the Child has made it possible to specifically improve the lives of countless individuals, work must be stepped up and expanded in order to guarantee that there will be a real difference for generations to come.

We view action in favour of women, which falls under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in the same context. Luxembourg would like to reaffirm its dedication to the significant work carried out by the United Nations funds and agencies in these areas. In particular I would like to mention the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). International action for reproductive health is at the crux of their programmes and today it remains indispensable. It requires firm support and the necessary budgetary resources. This is why Luxembourg firmly supports the efforts of UNFPA.

Reducing funding for women in difficulty is totally unjust and considerably increases the suffering of these individuals. To be sure, the work of those dedicated persons who inspire these programmes — including quite a few non-governmental organizations — will not come to an end any more than the labours of Sisyphus. But, are we not all aware of the progress which has been made possible in the daily life of individuals, groups and peoples, progress made through institutions which have been carefully conceived, democratically established, well managed, which in addition benefit from the moral authority provided them by the United Nations?

Bearing in mind the destiny of the individuals who are threatened here, international officials must be provided with the means to detect at an early stage any possible violation of peace and international security. A heightened awareness of our responsibility to provide for the protection of civilian populations is in fact necessary to allow for preventive action and, in particular, for maintaining peace.

As has been rightly noted by the Secretary-General, such preventive action should be done by strengthening the capacity of operational and structural prevention on all levels: local as well as national, regional and international, bilateral and multilateral. Increased interaction between all these levels is required so as to replace a culture of reaction by a genuine culture of prevention. The importance of investing in conflict prevention strategies, which may only yield fruit much later, is not always obvious. Such a choice requires a strong will of commitment by all of its players.

For its part, our universal Organization, through the Security Council and other bodies of the United Nations system, is dedicated to defining an outline of possible international action for prevention to make it more systematic and effective. The pivotal role of the United Nations and its authority are essential to achieve this end. It will be up to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly to deal with this question as well.

Increasingly, the need to focus attention on the destinies and tragedies experienced by victims and

react to the fact that conflicts today deliberately and increasingly claim victims among the civilian population can be given priority status, because international relations today are no longer hampered by the ideological battles of yesterday. However, antagonisms have not disappeared and may even cloak themselves in new forms. We need to remain vigilant.

One year ago, the international community was deeply shaken by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 against the civilian populations of New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. A few days ago we visited Ground Zero as a sign of our grief and to reaffirm our determination to act against barbarity. While we can indeed note that the efforts made since that tragic day to combat international terrorism have achieved some specific results, this should not, however, prompt us to let down our guard. Other tragedies are still open wounds, such as the particularly obvious case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Middle East, since Oslo, has seen extraordinary efforts at mediation. Faced with violence and hate, non-intervention and keeping one's distance are not real options. Efforts are continuing, aimed at creating conditions for new negotiations that might make it possible to conclude the work that has been languishing since Taba. The European Union is actively participating in this process and is making efforts, through new initiatives of the Danish presidency, to once again put the political context at the heart of our concerns. The tireless efforts of the international community are required to emphasize the need for moderation. Moderates, on whatever side, have no easy task when faced with extremism. But we support them. Peace requires all of us, in fact, to be internally split, as noted by Mr. Shlomo Ben Ami, but, I would add, it will also include reconciliation. And this must be prepared with the new external partner and also with those reluctant domestic forces, which must be reintegrated into the peace process.

Developments in Sri Lanka, moreover, demonstrate that hope can win the day over violence. In the case of Timor-Leste, it is also thanks to the United Nations that this hope has been fulfilled. And in Africa, several hotbeds of tension have been eased in 2002, in Angola, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in Burundi in particular. The effort made by the international community in Afghanistan must, as we know, be continued over time to insure the establishment and functioning of a stable democratic and fully representative State. The process of normalization under way in the Balkans deserves similar attention.

After some 160 years of existence as an independent State, Luxembourg is fully aware of the limits inherent in its size and the means available to it. In foreign policy we are acting with the firm conviction that the multilateral system of cooperation is one which provides a place and a role for everyone. In an interdependent world, we all must shoulder our responsibilities and make our contribution. And that is the basis of our commitment to the universal Organization, as it is the basis of our action to support development in the world. This is why we wish to raise our official development assistance to 1 per cent of GNP, after having been, in 2001, in the position to go beyond the threshold of 0.7 per cent recommended by the United Nations.

Our Organization brings together the international community. It is the unique forum which allows for exchanges and allows us to chart the path for totally new solutions. And I am gratified to see that during this session there are two new Members here in 2002, namely Switzerland and Timor-Leste. We congratulate them on having taken this decision and we extend a warm welcome to them to our Assembly.

The President: I now call on His Excellency the Honourable Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Mr. Badawi (Malaysia): Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as President of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I am confident that given your vast experience and diplomatic skills you will be able to steer this session to a successful conclusion.

I would also like to pay tribute to your distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the work of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Swiss Confederation as the 190th Member of our family of nations. We are confident that its membership, which formalizes its long involvement with the United Nations, will contribute enormously to the work of the Organization. We look forward to welcoming our newly independent neighbour, the

Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, as the 191st Member of the United Nations in the very near future.

Malaysia would also like to congratulate Africa on the establishment of the African Union and on its bold new initiatives, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

I also thank the Secretary General for his statement before the General Assembly. Malaysia shares his concerns over the four issues identified as threats to world peace.

A year has passed since the evil and cowardly attacks against the Organization's host country. As a result, the world has changed fundamentally in many ways. The international community has been galvanized into fighting all forms of terrorism. There is greater recognition that terrorism is a global problem that crosses borders and lurks in many of our countries, often without our knowledge.

The Security Council has taken prompt action resulting in mandatory measures aimed at eliminating all forms and manifestations of terrorism and requiring Member States to take legal, administrative, financial control and other law enforcement measures. Malaysia supports that action and reiterates its commitment to comprehensively fighting terrorism in all its forms at the domestic, regional and international levels.

Domestically, our Government has acted swiftly and decisively against terrorist groups that have threatened both our national security and international security. We have cooperated extensively at the bilateral level by sharing intelligence information and by implementing measures to cripple transnational crime networks that abet terrorist activities. In the Southeast Asian region, Malaysia and its partners in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have embarked on a programme of collaboration to deal with the issue at the regional level. At the international level, in addition to our support of United Nations actions and other international and bilateral efforts to fight terrorism, Malaysia works closely with the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and of the Commonwealth.

However, Malaysia believes that in our quest to combat terrorism, the norms and principles of international law should not be set aside. We also believe that in dealing with the menace, it is important for the international community to forge a broad consensus on what constitutes terrorism. Without a clear and common definition, certain perpetrators of terrorist acts will justify their actions in the name of State security or national liberation.

If the collective effort of the international community to win the fight against terrorism is to succeed, we must start looking at the problem in a comprehensive manner and must respond with a comprehensive strategy. It seems that in our urgency to address the problem, we overlook and continue to ignore why it exists in the first place. We forget that, however unjustified, terrorism is often rooted in political and economic grievances that still have not been adequately addressed. The fight against terrorism is not merely a fight against the perpetrators and conspirators of terrorist acts; it is also a fight against poverty, injustice, subjugation and illegal occupation that breed anger and hatred. There can be no comprehensive victory against terrorism if the root causes of terror are not eliminated.

Malaysia also regrets the continued association in certain quarters of Islam and Muslims with terrorism, as if one were synonymous with the other. We would like to reiterate that no race or religion should be condemned or discriminated against simply because some misguided people from that community are, or may have been, involved in terrorist activities.

Just as it is easy and convenient to hold a monolithic view of the Muslim world and therefore assume the worst about every adherent of the Islamic faith, it is also easy for Muslims to have a similarly monolithic and therefore incorrect view of other civilizations. If we continue to view each other in such terms, the confidence that has been engendered in the international community in our fight against terrorism can be eroded.

It is with those considerations in mind that Malaysia continues to call for the convening of a high-level international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to examine the terrorism issue in all its forms and manifestations and to formulate a joint response to this global threat.

Malaysia is concerned at the apparent lack of urgency in addressing the underlying factors that lead to cause terrorism. For example, most of the Muslim world believes that one of the key outstanding issues that continue to elicit resentment and fury is the situation in the Palestinian occupied territories.

Malaysia believes that, while all acts of violence against innocent civilians — whether inflicted by suicide bombers or by security forces — must be condemned, we must be even-handed in our approach in dealing with the situation in the region. It is important that we understand the root causes of violence there. We must put it in its proper context: the continued occupation of Arab lands by the Israeli occupying forces, in particular the demolition of Palestinian homes, the devastation of their towns and cities, the destruction of their livelihood and institutions and, worst of all, the loss of thousands of civilian lives and the wounding of tens of thousands more over the decades, which can only result in reactions from the Palestinian people. Israel's oppressive policies and practices have made life for the Palestinians unbearable and have engendered only hatred and resentment against the occupying Power, illegal settlers and those who are perceived to provide support to them. Israel must take advantage of the acceptance of the two-State solution and recognize that political and security issues must be looked at together. It must also acknowledge the need for the establishment of an international protection force to separate the two parties.

The international community, including the United Nations, cannot afford to stand on the sidelines indefinitely. It is time for the Security Council to become more actively involved and intervene directly in the situation, beginning with the dispatch of a United Nations or other international peacekeeping force to the occupied territories. Failure to act will only perpetuate the violence and exacerbate the resentment felt by the Palestinians — and by the Muslim world in general — towards those who are perceived to be responsible for refusing to address this issue in a fair and just manner.

We are pleased that Afghanistan is now on the threshold of becoming a viable, progressive and democratic State. However, many impediments to national unity and cohesion remain. These must be overcome through sustained international support and, more importantly, through the political will and commitment of the people of Afghanistan themselves. Such support should take the form of increased infusion of development funds and other forms of assistance and, more urgently, the promotion of a more secure environment in the whole country. We owe it to the long-suffering Afghan people to assist in the rehabilitation of their country and to ensure that the circumstances that led to their civil strife are removed and that they will not be abandoned once the immediate task of removing terrorist elements in Afghanistan is completed.

If the international community does not focus its efforts on comprehensively fighting terrorism by attempting to find a credible settlement between the Palestinians and the Israelis, and on nation-building efforts in Afghanistan, it risks being dragged into opening up battle fronts that could result in greater instability in the world and hamper efforts at combating terrorism.

In particular, we remain concerned that targeting Iraq outside the framework of the United Nations and in contravention of international law would not only be wrong, but result in a more volatile world order. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the United States to work with the United Nations to address this issue rather than pursue a unilateral policy of military intervention.

Malaysia agrees that the United Nations must not be cast aside. Engaging the international community through the United Nations, however, must not be merely an exercise in public diplomacy. The international community cannot be made to assume that military intervention against Iraq, in pursuit of both disarmament and regime change, is inevitable and that the United Nations is being engaged only as a matter of course.

The strength and relevance of this Organization has never come from affirming the unilateral designs of one Member nation; rather, it rests on the collective will of the international community that emerges from a multilateral process. Engaging the international community means initiating this consensual approach, which can address security concerns, without destabilizing the region, within the norms of international law.

In this effort, it is imperative that the international community be presented with clear and incontrovertible evidence of the perceived threat posed by Iraq to regional and international security. At the same time, every diplomatic and political effort should be made to urge Iraq to fully cooperate with the United Nations, including by allowing the return of United Nations weapons inspectors, and to comply with Security Council resolutions, as every State Member of

this Organization must do, so as to facilitate a resolution to this issue.

A pre-emptive attack against Iraq without any credible evidence being provided to the international community of the threat it poses will have serious implications for the international campaign against terrorism. Such an attack may produce real cleavages and draw imaginary battle lines between the Muslim world and the West, especially if the continued oppression of the Palestinians remains unattended-to. Such an attack could swell the ranks of the discontented in the Muslim world. It would provide a pretext for depraved extremist groups bent on stoking the flames of populist radicalism to mobilize and multiply. While it is important, therefore, to view the Iraq issue in terms of regional security, it is equally important to understand the broader consequences that will follow.

In our interdependent world, the need to strengthen the multilateral process is now more urgent than ever if we are to achieve our common goal of a just and humane international order based on international cooperation and solidarity.

The broader membership of this Organization has a vital stake in ensuring the centrality of the multilateral process as embodied by the United Nations and its specialized and affiliated agencies. Through it, the Members of the Organization can articulate their concerns and exercise their collective will in the protection and promotion of their interests. It is therefore important to ensure that the Organization and all that it stands for are not set aside on the basis of expediency or the exigencies of the moment. In this context we are reassured by the Secretary-General's emphasis on the imperative of the multilateral process.

As the country that will hold the forthcoming chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Malaysia will work together with other NAM members to ensure the continued centrality of this process, including the promotion of their development agenda.

In this context, we must continue to exert our combined efforts to ensure that globalization works for the benefit of all. In order to achieve this, we will have to create an international environment that is more conducive to satisfying the legitimate development priorities and needs of developing countries, as well as to addressing the economic imbalances prevailing in the world today.

The United Nations has a pivotal role in strengthening the multilateral process. It is ironic that in an era of enormous economic, financial and technological resources and capabilities, the world is witnessing a dangerous crisis of confidence in the credibility of multilateralism as a result of certain negative trends in the international system.

This challenge must be squarely and urgently addressed and remedial action taken here at the United Nations and in other relevant international forums. It is the expectation of States Members of the Organization that the United Nations will play a crucial and leading role in all of these efforts. Therein lies the continued relevance of the United Nations to its Member States.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Benaissa, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco.

Mr. Benaissa (Morocco) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to express to you, Sir, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, our sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation with a view to achieving a fruitful outcome to the session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to extend greetings to the Swiss Confederation and congratulations on its membership of the Organization. Given the cultural, humanitarian and intellectual heritage of that friendly country, its contribution will enrich the work of the Organization.

We also wish to congratulate Timor-Leste on its forthcoming accession to the Organization, and to wish that country every success.

Just three days have elapsed since the first anniversary of the tragic events of 11 September 2001. Those events deeply wounded the people of the United States and shook the entire world with horror. International relations have since entered a new phase whose dimensions and repercussions we are still assessing. Those events brought into focus the cohesion and solidarity of all segments of the American people in the face of such tragedy. They also brought to the fore the effectiveness and usefulness of solidarity and cooperation among States in combating terrorism. Indeed, as His Majesty King Mohammed VI has stated, terrorism has no religion or homeland. Everyone is aware of the Kingdom of Morocco's firm

stance and its renunciation of terrorism in all its forms, as well as its vigorous and concrete commitment to combating this scourge.

The gradual disappearance of economic borders and barriers to trade, the continued interdependence of markets and societies, the rapid development of information and communication technologies and the relegation of certain peoples to the sidelines of the world community have all added new challenges to the burdens already carried by numerous countries, in particular those in Africa, which have made great sacrifices in order to be integrated into the world trade system.

The African continent, unfortunately, is still a stage of tragic, complicated and generally fabricated conflicts. While Africa teems with huge natural and human resources, those very resources paradoxically become the cause and the fuel of many conflicts. Yet the international community remains hesitant to take decisive and necessary measures likely to create a climate propitious for peace and stability in our continent.

Seldom are the underlying reasons for conflict and instability in Africa taken into account. Of special importance in that regard are poverty, famine, the oppression of minorities, intolerance, control of natural resources, increased flows of refugees and displaced persons and health problems including endemic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS.

But now, to face up to all these challenges, our continent has established an integrated framework: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It will certainly give new impetus to the economic and social development of the continent. Morocco, expresses its hope that the international community will mobilize all its efforts within the framework of this energetic programme in order to reach effective and concrete solutions for solving the problems of our continent. My country is firmly intent on making an effective contribution to this endeavour.

The Kingdom of Morocco, convinced of the organic link between economic growth and the maintenance of stability and security, has spared no effort to help in settling African conflicts. In this vein, Morocco, on the initiative of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, convened a summit of heads of State of the Mano River Union, which was held at Rabat on 27 February 2002. At the summit, the Presidents of the sister countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone achieved practical results on consolidating regional peace, particularly with regard to laying down criteria for confidence-building, border security and revitalizing the work of the general secretariat of the Mano River Union. Morocco will pursue the necessary efforts to restore peace and stability in that region.

In the same vein, the Kingdom of Morocco continues its support for and contribution to the work of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), with a view to putting an end to conflict in that sisterly country, conflict which threatens stability in the whole region. In that context, my country, the Kingdom of Morocco, welcomed the agreement concluded on 30 July 2002 between the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda.

The Kingdom of Morocco expresses also its profound satisfaction at the restoration of peace and stability in the sister country of Angola, which will enable that country to rebuild its economy and to fully play its role at the regional, continental and international levels.

Concerning the issue of the Moroccan Sahara, the Kingdom of Morocco would like to recall its constant good will, and its sincere and genuine determination to reach a final political solution to this fabricated issue. Morocco has always cooperated with the United Nations in this regard, thus bearing testimony to its full understanding of and sense of responsibility towards the Organization. Morocco would like also to emphasize its readiness to continue its cooperation with the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker, with the Security Council, in order to achieve a lasting political solution to the issue of the Sahara, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1429 (2002). Such an approach will pave the way for the creation of propitious conditions for a new dynamic in the region of the Arab Maghreb, which will enable it to become a stable economic partner that enjoys the trust of other regional groupings.

In this context, Morocco has supported the option of the framework agreement proposed by Mr. Baker to the Security Council as a basis for a negotiated political solution for this long-standing conflict. That option would preserve the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco and its historical sovereignty over its land, and would ensure for the population of

the Sahara provinces the exercise of expanded competencies in the management of their affairs within the framework of regional democratic institutions. Morocco accepted this option as a basis for negotiation in order to reach a final and lasting political solution to this regional conflict.

In the same context, Morocco insists on the enforcement of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1429 (2002), calling for the immediate release, without restriction or condition, of all the 1,260 Moroccans detained in Algeria. Their release has been demanded unanimously by the international community and humanitarian organizations, in the forefront of which is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Morocco categorically rejects any political exploitation of humanitarian issues related to the Sahara problem, especially since this concerns the fate of the longest-held detainees in the world.

The Kingdom of Morocco is linked to Europe by strong and diverse historic bonds. The strengthening of these bonds with all European countries constitutes a central tenet of our foreign policy. The Association Agreement which has been concluded with the European Union, and the other initiatives to strengthen Moroccan-European relations at the political, economic, cultural and social levels, reflect Morocco's determination to enhance this relationship, particularly at a time when the European Union is in the process of expanding its membership, something that would open new opportunities and horizons for Moroccan-European partnership. This approach not only seeks to achieve a bilateral strategic objective between Morocco and Europe, but it is also a valuable contribution to nurturing relations in the Euro-Mediterranean region, whose security and stability have become paramount for the world.

Morocco, by virtue of its Mediterranean identity, plays a positive role in the strategic, economic and cultural formation of a Euro-Mediterranean space, as witnessed by its active participation in the Barcelona process and in the Agadir initiative announced by His Majesty King Mohammed VI for building a free-trade area among Arab Mediterranean countries.

In that spirit of open-mindedness, responsibility and confidence in the future, Morocco aspires to develop its relations with our neighbouring country, Spain, with a view to building the Euro-Mediterranean region and moving forward. Unfortunately, however, recent months have been marked by events that are inconsistent with the maintenance of security and stability in the region and that are unlikely to serve the interests of the two countries and their peoples.

Morocco has spared no efforts in avoiding any move likely to affect adversely the steady growth of its relations with Spain, hopes that the upcoming Moroccan-Spanish talks, which will take place in Madrid this month, will tackle all issues and conflicts between the two countries, within the framework of responsible, calm and constructive dialogue.

The completion of Moroccan territorial integrity is an absolute priority for His Majesty King Mohammed VI and for the entire Moroccan people. Therefore, Morocco considers the status of the occupied cities of Sebta and Melilia and of the neighbouring islands to be an anachronistic instance of colonialism that has no place at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Morocco has never ceased, neither at the bilateral level nor in international forums, to officially demand the recovery of these parts of its national territory that are occupied by Spain. In so doing, it has always expressed its readiness to engage in dialogue in order to arrive at a solution that would guarantee Morocco's sovereign rights and secure the interests of the Spanish community in the areas.

We fervently hope that the two neighbouring kingdoms, Morocco and Spain, which are bound by ties of neighbourliness, common history and future, will build strong, stable and neutral relations to meet the aspirations of both peoples. As they build with mutual respect, confidence and common strategic interests, these relations will take into account the need for preserving stability and peace in our region, particularly at this specific juncture when the international community is confronting formidable security challenges.

In spite of continued appeals made by the international community to bring about peace in the Middle East, the Palestinian people still suffer on a daily basis from the mad violence inflicted on them by the Israeli occupation forces and practices that flout the most elementary principles of international humanitarian law. Notwithstanding successive Security Council resolutions, Israel still persists in its repressive policy, paying no heed to any international covenant

and denying the very agreements into which it has entered.

In contrast, leaders of the Arab States have demonstrated a keen sense of responsibility and a continued pledge to embrace peace, culminating at the Arab summit in Beirut in March 2002 with the adoption of the Arab peace initiative presented by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdul-Aziz of the sister Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On the other hand, Morocco welcomes the vision advocated by United States President George W. Bush, in which he called for the establishment of a Palestinian State to coexist side by side with Israel, as a lasting and viable solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, one likely to achieve peace and security for all peoples of the region and to put a definite end to violence and instability. However, recent events and developments in the region do not, unfortunately, give substance to this vision. The spiral of violence has instead witnessed an unprecedented escalation.

For decades, the Kingdom of Morocco has been endeavouring to act as a bridge between the peoples of the region, with a view to achieving a climate of peace and security and contributing to the revitalization of the peace process, the creation of an independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital and the recovery by Syria and Lebanon of their territories occupied since 1967.

In view of the importance of Al-Quds al-Sharif as a key point in the peace process, and seeking to preserve the national and religious identity of this Holy City in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, is continuing his efforts, along with brother Kings, Emirs and Presidents of the Muslim member States of the Committee, with the United States of America and the Russian Federation in their capacity as peace patrons, and with the presidency of the European Union, with His Holiness the Pope and with the United Nations Secretary-General, in order to safeguard the Islamic Arab character of Al-Quds al-Sharif and to preserve it as a place of coexistence and tolerance among the three revealed religions.

The Iraqi issue has become a major preoccupation for the entire world, owing to the suffering of the Iraqi people. For this reason, while we demand that Iraq implement the relevant United Nations resolutions, we also call for deep reflection and patience in dealing with the Iraqi question, hoping that the Iraqi Government will respond to the international community's request. The aim would be to avoid the infliction of further suffering, distress and misery on the Iraqi people. At any rate, the United Nations is required to act within the framework of its Charter's principles and purposes in order to preserve the stability and security of all countries in the region. In this context, Morocco expresses its concern with regard to the Kuwaiti prisoners of war and missing persons, and the need to preserve the unity and independence of the State of Kuwait. Morocco also emphasizes the need to preserve Iraq's unity and sovereignty over all its territory.

The same region is witnessing another conflict involving two sister States that have strong bonds of friendship and cooperation with Morocco — that is, the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran. My country is hopeful that our brothers in Iran will become convinced of the need to settle the conflict over the islands of Abu Musa, the Greater Tunb and the Lesser Tunb, by peaceful means, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the rules of international law. This will affect positively their bilateral relations, as well as the stability and cooperation in the region.

In conclusion, under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the Kingdom of Morocco, as a member of the African, Arab, and Muslim family and given its position in the Euro-Mediterranean region, has always held dear the basic values of tolerance, moderation, open-mindedness and dialogue in dealing with the international community. Morocco will always honour its obligations towards the international community to strengthen the foundations of security and stability and to give impetus to the new visions charted for the world of the twenty-first century. We will always remain ready to contribute within the United Nations to finding the most efficient means of improving conditions in the world.

The President: I call on His Excellency The Honourable Phil Goff, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand.

Mr. Goff (New Zealand): Mr. President, may I begin by congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency and assure you of New Zealand's cooperation during your term of office.

The opening of this, the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, came just one day after the anniversary of the terrorist attack of 11 September 2001, which shocked this city and the international community. The premeditated and callous mass murder of 3,000 people from 79 different countries was a sharp warning to us of the ongoing threats to peace and stability in our world. It was to protect humanity against such threats that the nations of the world came together in 1945 to establish this Organization in the belief that collective action was necessary to guarantee global peace.

Today, in the second year of a new millennium, the need to act multilaterally is greater than ever before. Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, environmental degradation, people-smuggling, drug-trafficking, diseases such as HIV/AIDS and the unsustainable depletion of our natural resources are all global matters that require a collective response.

We can be proud that a year ago the response by the United Nations to a new and unprecedented level of terrorism was immediate, united and effective. The primary victim of the attack, the United States, sought and secured international cooperation that achieved the incapacitation of the Al Qaeda terrorist organization and the removal of the Taliban regime that had hosted it. It was a model for international unity of purpose and multilateral action. It was a lesson that should not be forgotten as this Organization tackles other problems confronting humanity.

New Zealand has worked wholeheartedly under the mandate provided by the United Nations to defeat terrorism. We have introduced legislation to deny terrorist organizations funding and resources in line with Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). We have sought to assist our neighbours in the Pacific to do the same. We have committed peacekeeping personnel to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and combat forces under Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. But we are also aware that actions to suppress terrorism must be accompanied by measures to tackle the causes of terrorism. Injustice, lack of opportunity, hopelessness, desperation and the failure of legitimate channels to redress grievances all give rise to resort to terrorist actions.

The failure to resolve differences between Israeli and Palestinian people in the Middle East continues to be a catalyst for recruitment into terrorism. The Secretary-General, in opening this session, spelled out the basis for resolving the dispute. He referred to land for peace, an end to terror and to occupation, and to two States, Israel and Palestine, with secure and recognized borders. Both peoples are destined to live side by side. Both will benefit from an end to violence and a negotiated settlement. But agreement requires good faith from each side and a determined effort by the international community. We fully endorse the Secretary-General's renewed call for an international peace conference. Progress on this issue is now more vital than ever.

The situation in Iraq is also a threat to world peace, but we must look for solutions that will resolve and do not exacerbate that threat. No nation can be exempt from the requirement to comply with the resolutions passed by this Organization. That is necessary if the rule of law is to apply internationally. No nation can be allowed to commit aggression or to use weapons of mass destruction against its own people. The requirement to comply with United Nations resolutions is not the instruction of one country to Iraq; it is collective instruction that should have the unanimous endorsement of all Member countries.

Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions is a challenge to the entire United Nations membership. The United Nations must meet this challenge. How the situation is resolved matters to us all, not least the countries of the region itself.

Those who can exercise influence over Iraq should do so to avoid the need for resort to other actions. The response chosen by the Security Council must, however, take into account the need not to impose further costs on ordinary Iraqi people innocent of any wrongdoing. The response should not involve actions that undermine, rather than strengthen, the war against terrorism.

The United Nations has shown that collective action can save lives and help rebuild nations. We will soon welcome the world's newest nation, East Timor, into the United Nations, and we should celebrate the success of the United Nations peacekeeping mission and Transitional Administration in that country. I congratulate Sergio Vieira de Mello, the Secretary-General's former Special Representative, on his role, and I thank those countries that contributed so much to

giving hope and opportunity to the people of that small country.

New Zealand has had a battalion of peacekeepers deployed in East Timor since September 1999, and also has peacekeepers serving in 12 other countries. We are proud that they have performed their role with professionalism and respect for the people in whose countries they operate. Notwithstanding the small size of our population, New Zealand currently is the twenty-second-largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping personnel.

The promotion of human rights is another area where multilateral action by the international community is essential. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the United Nations has set out universal standards for the observance of human rights. There is no justification for any country to deviate from those human rights standards. It is a mark of shame that States Members of this Organization continue to breach basic human rights and a disgrace that other countries too often act as apologists for the offending regimes.

An important landmark in the last year has been the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. As the culmination of longstanding efforts by non-governmental organizations, Governments and the international community as a whole, it offers the prospect of bringing justice to the victims of the most horrific crimes known to humankind and bringing their perpetrators to justice. It will serve as a deterrent where none has existed before. We have listened carefully to those who argue that the Court is not necessary and that it unduly jeopardizes their peacekeepers, but we cannot agree. The status quo, relying on domestic jurisdiction alone, has failed humankind throughout history and has borne witness to appalling crimes. The new regime has carefully built-in safeguards to protect the innocent.

We were dismayed by the actions of the Security Council in July. At that time, we challenged both the legitimacy and the substance of the Council's action. We do not believe that it was consistent with the Rome Statute or that the Council is able to arrogate to itself the power to change treaty relationships.

A further issue on which greater progress must be made is that of disarmament. The fact that humanity survived the nightmare of potential nuclear destruction during the cold war cannot be allowed to make us complacent about ongoing threats from weapons of mass destruction.

We welcome the Treaty of Moscow and the agreement between Russia and the United States to cut the number of strategic nuclear weapons each country deploys. These reductions, however, are not a substitute for irreversible cuts in, and the total elimination of, those weapons.

In some respects even greater danger is posed by short-range tactical nuclear weapons. There is a real risk that these could be launched by accident or in confusion, with no time available for communication between opposing sides.

Over the last year, two significant events have made our world a most dangerous place. The first is the emergence of international terrorist groups that have shown their willingness to use weapons of mass destruction — biological, chemical or nuclear — should they gain access to them.

The second is the situation in South Asia, where the world recently came close to direct conflict between two countries with nuclear capability. The international community has not done enough to reduce those risks.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not been brought into effect. Progress towards the implementation of undertakings made by nuclear-weapon States at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference has stalled. Nations have not taken sufficient steps to stop the production of fissile material and to reduce stocks.

In this and in many other areas much more needs to be done to address growing problems that affect all of us. The awful toll of HIV/AIDS, slowness in response to global warming and the growth in the smuggling and trafficking of people are but three further examples.

Mr. Tokaev (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is essential that we renew our commitment to multilateralism as the best way to address global problems. That requires not simply money but, most importantly, political will. It is not a case of putting global interests ahead of national interests. Global

interests are national interests. The United Nations is our most valuable international organization, but we need to do more to enhance its relevance, value and its unique authority. All of us are stakeholders in its success.

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to make an announcement regarding the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to consider how to support the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which, as you know, will be held on Monday, 16 September. Draft resolution A/57/L.2, entitled "United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development", has just been distributed in the General Assembly Hall.

Also, in view of the really very high number of speakers already inscribed on the list of speakers and in order to comply with the decision of the Assembly that the high-level plenary meeting on NEPAD should meet from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and then from 3.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. on Monday, I would like to ask for the cooperation of speakers in the debate on NEPAD by limiting their statements to five minutes. I, therefore, appeal to speakers in the debate on NEPAD to keep that five-minute limit in mind when they are preparing their statements for Monday. Thank you for your understanding.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Mrs. Ferrero-Waldner (Austria): Let me begin by welcoming Switzerland, our western neighbour, as a full member of the United Nations and her first participation in the General Assembly after her accession. Without our Swiss friends the United Nations would not be complete. Expanding the global reach of the United Nations can be seen as a positive aspect of globalization.

Having supported United Nations efforts to bring about a solution to the East Timor conflict for many years, Austria also looks forward to 27 September and wishes to congratulate East Timor on becoming the 191st Member of the United Nations.

Austria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the Prime Minister of Denmark on behalf of the European Union. I should like to add a few observations to that very comprehensive statement.

Let me reiterate the sympathy of the Austrian people for the victims of 11 September 2001. Austria has shown strong solidarity from the first hour after the attacks and has acted in unison with her European partners and the United Nations to combat terrorism — a resolve that remains strong and will continue to do so.

As a former staff member of the United Nations, I wish to convey my country's sincere gratitude to the many dedicated people who are in the service of the United Nations in New York and at the other headquarters in Vienna and Geneva, as well as out there in the field, for their efforts on behalf of the international community in its fight against terror.

Combating terrorism requires a global effort and a comprehensive approach: prevention and the protection of the security of our countries and of the basic values of freedom and human rights, as well as coercive measures as a last resort. We must, however, base our decisions and actions on international law. The Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC) under the very able leadership of Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Ambassador of the United Kingdom, is at the core of the United Nations coordinating role.

We must ensure that all States join and can join those efforts. To promote that goal, Austria hosted a symposium on combating international terrorism at the Vienna International Centre in June of this year, which highlighted the capacity of the Vienna-based United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) to provide efficient technical assistance to Member States in their fight against terrorism. Austria will make an additional million euros available for the strengthening of the ODCCP.

I am glad to note that Secretary-General Kofi Annan shares our view on the importance of the Vienna-based United Nations units, as expressed in his report on the need to strengthen the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the Secretariat. The report of Policy Working Group on the United Nations and Terrorism published earlier this week comes to the same conclusion. I therefore call upon the Member States to support that position.

It is also important to remind ourselves that the fight against terrorism cannot be fought with soldiers and policemen alone; we also need to fight the root causes: the abject levels of poverty, inequality,

injustice, the lack of sustainable development and of good governance.

When it comes to dangers for world security, we also have to focus on unresolved and perilous regional conflicts, such as in the Middle East. What is needed is an effort to speedily arrive at a political solution providing for two States, Israel and Palestine, within secure and recognized borders. Austria seconds the idea of an early international conference with the support of the Quartet and interested countries of the region aimed at finding solutions to the political issues such as the final borders of the two States, the final status of Jerusalem and the question of refugees. Austria considers the newly designed road map of the European Union towards the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State in the next three years to be a good basis for achieving a final and comprehensive settlement of the conflict in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), taking into consideration the Arab peace plan adopted in Beirut as well.

While continuing to respect the elected leadership of the Palestinian people the European Union has expressed its readiness to give all necessary and possible support to the reform process of the Palestinian Authority. Austria participates actively in those efforts. Austria is also deeply concerned that human suffering in the conflict has attained unacceptable levels, be it as a result of terror or of countermeasures.

The Middle East has also garnered the attention of the international community in the context of the danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The growing tensions result from the continued non-compliance with United Nations Security Council resolutions on the part of Iraq. The potential threat of weapons of mass destruction endangering world peace through such policies should not and cannot be tolerated. For that reason Austria supports the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General to bring about the speedy, unfettered and unconditional return of United Nations weapons inspectors to Iraq, along with full compliance with the obligations contained in all relevant Security Council resolutions.

Austria welcomes the statement of President George Bush seeking broad international and multilateral support and cooperation with the Security Council on the issue of how to deal with the threat emanating from regimes that support terror or seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Only the Security Council can provide the legitimacy we need. At the same time, it is evident that the Security Council itself has to take responsibility for ensuring full compliance with its resolutions in order to maintain world peace.

The conflict between India and Pakistan over the issue of Kashmir also needs an urgent political solution. The consequences of an escalation could be catastrophic for the region and beyond.

In recent weeks, we have been starkly reminded of the fact that Afghanistan, which has been wrested from Taliban and Al Qaeda rule and has had a promising new start with the assistance of the international community, has yet to achieve a lasting peace and stability. The international community should remain committed and has to continue its support of the new Government of Afghanistan.

The fight against terrorism and violent fundamentalism in Afghanistan has also highlighted the importance of the whole region of Central Asia. During its chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2000, Austria made it a priority to draw the attention of world opinion to the unresolved issues and problems and to the very impressive potential of that region given mutually useful cooperation and good governance.

Turning to our own neighbourhood, I want to reiterate the importance Austria attributes to European Union enlargement and our firm commitment to finalizing the ongoing negotiating process towards the end of this year. Austria looks forward to welcoming new members by 2004, thus turning the vision of a united Europe into reality and extending the European zone of peace, stability and welfare to the whole continent and beyond.

I am glad to note that South-Eastern Europe has made substantial progress towards stability generated by various multilateral initiatives, particularly the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and the Zagreb process. As an additional instrument for enhancing development in that region, in May of this year the Danube Cooperation Project was launched in Vienna, the aim of which is to make use of the Danube River as an integrative factor connecting the 13 countries of the whole Danube basin.

The dialogue among civilizations, which Austria has strongly supported from the beginning, is a new and important tool of diplomacy that should help us drain the breeding grounds of terrorism. In order to take this dialogue from the elites to the general public, we need to cooperate with the media. To that end, I organized an expert seminar on the role of the media in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in June of this year. This effort is designed to lead, hopefully, to a media code of conduct to emanate from the media themselves in order to create better understanding between the cultures and commonly to project messages shedding a positive light on cultural diversity.

As of July of this year, Austria has chaired the Human Security Network, the only interregional grouping in the United Nations framework particularly propelling issues of human security. In my capacity as Chairperson of that group, I have put the following two issues at the top of our agenda: the needs for a globally shared acquisition of a human rights culture through human rights education and for effectively addressing the terrible plight suffered by an ever-growing number of children in the world exposed to the horrors of armed conflict. The first "human rights city" in Europe, the Austrian city of Graz, will also host next year's ministerial meeting of the Human Security Network. In this context I should also like to express Austria's strong support for the adoption of the draft protocol of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

In my function as President of the Human Security Network, I have also taken the initiative, in the framework of the group of female foreign ministers, to raise the issue of Amina Lawal in a common letter to the Foreign Minister of Nigeria in order to remind Nigeria of its obligations under international human rights law.

In the Millennium Declaration, we set clear targets for our combined development efforts as Member States. We all did this in recognition of the priority attached to the fight against poverty and for a better and more equitable world. Disastrous floods in parts of Central Europe, including my own country, in Asia and the Americas, as well as droughts in other parts of the world just before the start of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, were a painful indication of changes rendering sustainable development even more important. The Summit brought about an action programme and a political declaration, which we welcome, although we would have wished to take some issues even further, such as in the field of renewable energy. I share the view of the Secretary-General that the Summit has instigated global action among a wide range of actors. It has highlighted the relationship between economy, ecology, social issues and development. It has also reaffirmed the Doha and Monterrey compromises.

The follow-up will have to cut through the complexities of the process and to pursue the most pressing issues. Implementation is the key word. This will be best accomplished by sectoral conferences on the major issues involved. Austria appreciates that the Summit has helped convince some major countries to join the ranks of those, such as Austria, that have already ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

Before closing, let me express my best wishes for a successful session of the Assembly under Mr. Kavan's guidance and allow me also to thank his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, for his leadership and his efforts towards strengthening the General Assembly.

Having returned deeply impressed from South Africa, let me close by quoting a real hero and a man who stands for his principles while promoting reconciliation — Mr. Nelson Mandela. The following quote is from the entrance to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg, which I just visited: "To be free is not merely to put off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Anatoliy Zlenko.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): It is a great honour and pleasure to congratulate the representative of the Group of Eastern European States on his election to the high post of President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, let me wish him success and assure him of our support. I would like to address words of respect and gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey cordial congratulations to a new, welcome Member of the United Nations, the Swiss Confederation. We look forward also to welcoming the Democratic Republic of East Timor as a Member of the United Nations shortly.

We consider the joining of the United Nations by those States a truly historic event which testifies to the viability of our great family of nations.

The first days of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly began with a commemoration of the victims of the horrible terrorist acts of 11 September 2001. Over the past year we have repeatedly reflected on whether those events would remain a tragic moment in history, or whether they would prove to be a turning point. We have been searching for an answer to a question representing the most difficult challenge to humankind: how to preserve the fundamental right of every person — the right to life.

For Ukraine, "terror" and "terrorism" are not just words. For decades, the Ukrainian people lived under the oppression of terror, which was raised to the rank of State policy. Next year Ukraine will commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the induced famine which in 1932 and 1933 took the lives of over 7 million Ukrainians. That most tragic event in our modern history, caused by the totalitarian regime, was a brutal act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation. At that time the world failed to respond to our tragedy. Nor did it recognize early enough the face of fascism: certain politicians and certain States thought that that evil would bypass them. The consequences of that inaction turned out to be enormous.

Today, at the beginning of a new millennium, I am confident that each of us would like to rely upon the encouraging momentum of change which has taken place in the international arena, and to rely upon the unifying force with which the world responded to the events of 11 September 2001. In the face of the challenge of terrorism, the international community demonstrated its determination and resolve. Tangible results have been achieved by the antiterrorism coalition.

We regard the fight against terrorism as one of the aspect of a broad and long-term process of comprehensive international action aimed at abolishing the philosophy of hatred and intolerance, which is exacerbated by conflicts in various regions of the world.

The need for a new philosophy is particularly acute on the security front: success of the international presence in Afghanistan, the completion of the peacekeeping mission in East Timor and normalization in the Balkans are taking place alongside the dramatic developments in the Middle East, the so-called frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space, which remain unresolved, and persistent security problems in Africa. In this context, the United Nations has no right to limit itself to passive observation and uninvolved analysis.

At the Millennium Summit, the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, put forward an initiative on developing a comprehensive United Nations strategy for conflict prevention. We hope that ongoing discussions in the United Nations on the recommendations made by the Secretary-General on this issue will contribute to a real shift from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention.

The United Nations is capable of utilizing its consolidating force to strengthen the legal basis of international relations. We highly value the United Nations contribution to this process that brought into force the Rome Statute and led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court. Today, it is highly important to ensure the effectiveness of the Court and to preserve the integrity of its Statute.

Another priority task in this sphere is to conclude the elaboration of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. This year Ukraine became a party to the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. Upon the completion of relevant domestic procedures on the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, Ukraine will be a party to all 12 universal instruments against terrorism.

A number of tasks facing the international community in the social and economic spheres are further defining the role of the United Nations as a unique forum for dialogue among developed countries, countries with economies in transition and developing nations.

As a member of the Economic and Social Council, Ukraine stresses the need for reform of the Council and for strengthening its coordinating role. That process would, inter alia, significantly strengthen the Organization's potential to ensure consistent and effective implementation of the provisions of the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg.

At the Johannesburg Summit, the President of Ukraine proposed the formulation of innovative financial stimulation mechanisms for developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular through debt-for-sustainable-development swaps. In our view, such steps would have a positive impact on nations' rates of economic growth and ecologically responsible development.

On 31 December 2001 Ukraine concluded its two-year term of membership of the Security Council. As a member of the Council, our country strived to make practical contributions towards finding solutions to critical security problems in many regions of today's world. Our country's position of principle is still that the Security Council is the only organ with the legitimate right to decide on the use of force, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. At the same time we consistently stand for increased transparency in the Council's work, and we hope that progress on internal changes will allow the process of comprehensive and long-awaited reform to start.

An important element of Ukraine's participation in United Nations efforts in the sphere of peace and security will continue to be its contribution to peacekeeping activities of the Organization. We believe that the key role played by United Nations peacekeeping operations and the personal contribution made by each peacekeeper deserve adequate recognition by the international community. I am confident that everybody present in this Hall will share our view. At the current session of the General Assembly, Ukraine will present a draft resolution proposing annual observance of an International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers as a way to pay tribute to the memory of fallen peacekeepers and to honour the participants in ongoing and past missions. We hope this will be unanimously supported.

Ukraine views positively the advancement of the stabilization process in the Balkans, in particular in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. Ukraine holds to a consistent position concerning the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of the Balkan States, and it fully supports the active involvement of European actors in an effort to further normalize the security situation in the region.

In contrast to a promising assessment of the situation in the Balkans, we are compelled to voice our regret over the absence of progress in the settlement of other problems which are of particular interest to Ukraine. Among them is the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The absence of confidence between the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides stands in the way of a renewal of political dialogue. As host country to the third meeting of the sides on confidence-building measures, which was held in Yalta in March 2001, Ukraine stands ready to take practical steps, in cooperation with the United Nations and other interested States, in order to renew the spirit of Yalta.

Speaking of the situation in Georgia, I cannot fail to mention that Ukraine is deeply concerned at the situation related to developments in the Pankisi valley. Ukraine believes that the existing misunderstandings can be resolved only through peaceful means, in compliance with the norms and principles of international law. We call upon the parties to employ all available political and diplomatic mechanisms to arrive at a mutual understanding and to take advantage of every opportunity to achieve détente in the current situation. Ukraine unconditionally supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

The situation in the Middle East also remains a source of deep concern for Ukraine. It is quite obvious today that the parties have become trapped in a cycle of violence, which contradicts the true aspirations of both peoples and breeds yet more hatred and desperation. We fully support the efforts of the international community, in particular the Quartet and the countries of the region, aimed at assisting the parties in finding peaceful ways to settle the conflict. Ukraine, for its part, strives to contribute in every possible way to a peaceful settlement. In April this year, during his visit to the region, President Leonid Kuchma presented Ukrainian proposals in the framework of international diplomatic efforts aimed at a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict; these envisage a range of parallel steps in the security, economic and political spheres. I should like to take this opportunity to confirm Ukraine's readiness to offer a venue on its territory and to provide all appropriate conditions for the conduct of talks on this issue. The achievement of a final, just and durable peace in the Middle East is not possible without the resumption of peace negotiations on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The development of the situation concerning Iraq cannot fail to cause serious concern. We rely on the potential of the United Nations to solve this problem. The resolutions of the Security Council should be fully implemented. We expect that the new round of negotiations between the United Nations and Iraq will help to find ways to resolve this issue.

Today, the world looks with hope to the unprecedented integration process on the African continent. We hope that the birth of the African Union will strengthen the spirit of African brotherhood and unity in responding to the numerous challenges that confront the continent: armed conflict, poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Ukraine welcomes the African Union's establishment and its far-reaching plans to revitalize the continent. We hope that the New Partnership for Africa's Development will unite the nations of the world in a global partnership in support of peace, stability and development on the African continent. For its part, Ukraine is ready to continue to strengthen its cooperation and expand its economic ties with the countries of a united Africa, including in the framework of the new global partnership for the development of the continent.

Ensuring the proper implementation of the principles of the supremacy of law, the creation of conditions for economic growth and the effective functioning of the institutions of an open society are goals that remain fundamental in Ukraine's national policy. The President of Ukraine has launched a programme of political reforms to ensure a transition to a parliamentary-presidential form of governance. That process should bring about the further democratization of our society and should lead to consolidation of all domestic resources in order to achieve European standards and to strengthen concord in Ukrainian society. Our determined strategic goal is to become a member of the European Union and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which should finally ensure the indivisibility of the European political, economic and security space. Our course of action is aimed at making Ukraine a pillar of political stability, economic prosperity and cultural renaissance.

Here, I cannot fail to mention a tragic problem for Ukraine that is related to the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Our country must address — virtually on its own — a complex set of technological, social and economic problems connected to the mitigation of that disaster's consequences as well as to the closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 2000. We expect that our efforts will be supported by concrete action on the part of the international community, in particular through the implementation of the new United Nations strategy for Chernobyl.

Guided by the aspiration to achieve practical results, we are also determined to solve a broad range of other problems that have an important place on the agenda of the world forum. Undoubtedly, the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic is one of the most challenging of these. I should like to inform the Assembly that a regional conference for the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia will be held in Ukraine in November this year with the support of the United Nations and of other international partners.

I am confident that, a year after the 11 September tragedy in the United States, each of us realizes the particular significance of the tasks facing the United Nations. Looking ahead to the new challenges, we hope that, in the cause of protecting civilization's values, we shall be guided by our wisdom, which will allow us to avoid tragic scenarios and to protect the rights of every inhabitant of the planet, including every new human being who comes into the world even as we speak in this debate: the right to life, the right to dignity, the right to this world.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency The Honourable Samuel Rudolph Insanally, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana and former President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Over the Assembly hangs a cloud of uncertainty — indeed, of unease — about the future of multilateralism and of international relations generally. The tragedy of 11 September 2001, which we commemorated just three days ago, has so numbed our minds that we have yet to fully understand its consequences. Therefore, it is meet that, as a family of nations, we should not only remember the disaster, but also seek to learn from it how we can best restore to mankind some measure of faith and hope in our common humanity.

My delegation is pleased to see Mr. Jan Kavan presiding over the Assembly, since, as the representative of a country that has known the horror of war, he will undoubtedly inspire us to find our way forward. In wishing his presidency well, I would also like to place on record our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea for

guiding us through a most difficult and challenging time. Our appreciation and thanks must also extend to the Secretary-General, who, throughout these past months, has helped to sustain our commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

We are pleased to welcome Switzerland as a full member of the family of nations, and we look forward to doing the same for East Timor when it takes its place among us.

The international system is now plagued by dangerous instability which threatens to undermine — if not to destroy — many of our States. Not only do we face terrorism, with its horrific violence, but we must also live with other manifestations of terror in the form of poverty, hunger and disease, which, although more silent, are no less deadly.

Conflict, both within and among States, clearly demonstrates how poorly an economy functions without political and social cohesion. Divisions that rend the fabric of our societies — divisions that derive ultimately from ethnicity and race — are not only severely counterproductive to our attempts to better the commonweal, but preclude the emergence of the durable peace and tranquillity without which we will never be able to prosper.

Recent global conferences have focused our attention on the importance of a rights-based approach to social inclusion. However, commitment to inclusive policies rests not only with States but with civil society as a whole. Poverty and underdevelopment are now easily exploited by some elements in our societies to undermine the authority of democratically elected Governments and to exacerbate ethnic and other tensions.

This instability is further compounded by the rampant trade in illegal drugs and arms, with its attendant corruption and violence, which daily tests the legal, financial, security and governance capabilities of most small States. The social contract between the State and its citizens has been seriously jeopardized by these new political developments. Greater national endeavours and international solidarity are now necessary if we are to confront these challenges and ensure the economic and social progress of our peoples.

Old conflicts persist, denying entire populations the opportunity to live in peace and security. The situation in the Middle East must be of special concern to us all, since it threatens to become a wider conflict. The right of the Palestinian people to national self-determination — a right guaranteed by international law — must be upheld if there is to be a just and lasting solution to the region's problems.

The tensions which exist in India-Pakistan relations with regard to Kashmir should not be allowed to persist, given the risk of calamitous nuclear conflict. As a country which is committed to the pacific settlement of disputes and as a friend of those two important countries of Asia, from which many of our own ancestors originated, Guyana wishes to encourage them to continue their search for a definitive solution.

Global instability results also from our failure to implement the Agenda for Development. After more than a decade of development-related conferences, we have yet to grasp fully the implications for international cooperation of an increasingly interdependent world and a globalized economy. The recent meetings in Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg brought the international community full circle in assessing the effectiveness of global collective action aimed at the realization of the millennium development goals and the eradication of poverty. We should now be fully persuaded that global action remains indispensable to the development process.

What is less clear, however, is the relationship that should underlie such action, which continues to be a daunting challenge. To what extent can equality be achieved in a system of skewed economic and military power? Will sovereignty ever subject itself to the imperatives of the global good? How can trustworthy procedures be found for international intervention in situations characterized by the threat of collapse of national social and economic structures? What more can be done so that the current international trading system is beneficial for all States, not for only a select few? How can the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions be made more responsive to the concerns and needs of the developing countries in particular?

I know that there are no easy answers to these questions. Indeed, each international conference and every general debate that takes place in this Assembly has made us more aware of how difficult it is to find a consensual approach to these issues. Dialogue and engagement are continuously balanced against hasty attempts to achieve short-term goals. Yet the

imperative of global stability — both political and economic — requires a greater symbiotic relationship among States. The increased permeability of borders, which has made all countries vulnerable to contagion from outside, is a reality which we cannot ignore.

Meanwhile, the debate on the benefits of globalization is becoming increasingly polarized. Despite their own best efforts at reform and restructuring, many developing countries have not really seen any significant improvement in their economic and social condition. The growth rate of most developing countries was 2 per cent lower in the 1990s than it was in the oil crisis years of the 1970s. Similarly, although the number of people living in extreme poverty, on less than one dollar a day, has reportedly decreased the past 15 years, those living on less than two dollars a day — an insignificant sum — has increased. Thus, poverty figures have in effect remained high, despite an improvement in world income over the past decade by an average of 2.5 per cent annually.

The situation has been especially difficult for small States. Over the past 10 years, the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), of which we are one, have been pursuing aggressive socio-economic reform measures designed to enhance the region's economic competitiveness so as to benefit from globalization. The results have generally been disappointing, in large part due to the small size, and the geographic location of the CARICOM countries, as well as their limited natural resource base and high dependence on international trade, all of which make their economies vulnerable to changes in the global economy. The situation is further aggravated by the high incidence of HIV/AIDS — the second highest in the world.

Small States such as ours in the Caribbean require development cooperation that is based on mutual trust and the fulfilment of commitments. One major step in this direction should be to focus on new ways of balancing equity, economics and ecology in order to create opportunities for small economies without inflicting disillusionment and despair. Every effort should also be made to ensure the full implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative so as to liquidate the debt burden in the poorest countries. To address the challenge of development, an integrated strategy must be found to address all the different elements of the problem.

Now — especially since Monterrey — it is fashionable to speak of partnership for sustainable development. Indeed, partnership, if properly conceived and implemented, can serve to eradicate poverty and promote economic growth. However, as the President of Guyana stated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Johannesburg, if it is to succeed, partnership between States must be based not on double standards but on mutual trust and respect and on the interests of all parties. Public/private-sector partnerships must be founded on equity and transparency, with full regard to the laws of our countries. Finally, partnerships with multilateral financial institutions must be informed more by an understanding of the situation in our countries and less by a doctrinaire approach to policy-making. To quote the President directly, "Progress will only come if there is an enlightened understanding of partnership."

Concerned by the inadequacy of past development models and the trend towards leaving development matters largely to market forces, Guyana has sought to promote at the United Nations the concept of a new global human order based on a genuine partnership for cooperation. By addressing the problems of peace and development in a holistic manner, this "concordat" would provide developing countries with the structural, strategic and long-term support that they need. Guyana hopes to build upon resolution 55/48 in the coming months with the aim of bringing greater predictability and stability to international development cooperation.

It is clear that the period ahead of us is fraught with difficulty, and that some of the challenges are historically unprecedented in scale. The instability and uncertainty by which so many societies around the world are afflicted must be attended to if we are to avoid failure. We must therefore ready the United Nations, the most important and most widely supported international governmental organization in existence, to address these problems. There is simply nowhere else to take them.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Lagumdzija (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. Allow me at the

outset to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Jan Kavan on his well-deserved election to the presidency.

The tragic events of 11 September have made us reconsider our achievements, real values, and the links between poverty, development, sustainability, respect for human rights and real progress. Yet, the goals envisioned by the perpetrators of those crimes have certainly not been fulfilled. The world has become more united and more determined to fight terrorism as a global threat to the values of civilization. The result is increased cooperation among specialized services and bodies of different States, as well as international organizations. However, we must be prepared for a long and exhausting confrontation with this evil of our times.

Last year we were all rightly focused on Afghanistan. Today we are concerned also about future steps regarding Iraq as a great threat to world stability and a shelter for terrorism. Fortunately, after a decade of being in focus as a crisis area, that South-Eastern Europe, the Balkans, along with Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the heart of the region, are no longer "CNN-able", given the present growing stability.

The time has come to salute the new image of my country and to start re-branding the perception of the region as a whole, which no longer fits anymore the "Balkan ghosts" stereotype. Great concerns such as Iraq, the Middle East and Kashmir should not let us forget that the Balkan region is bearing good news. We are all striving to finish the job of fully integrating the region into European democratic structures and values.

Enormous efforts and achievements are behind us, but we have to be careful and patient until stability becomes self-sustainable through the building of jobs, justice and functioning institutions, which will hold together new democracy.

In the light of last year's terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, our fragile State — the only European State where Muslims represent the majority religious group — was confronted with the heavy pressure of prejudice regarding a "clash between civilizations". But, as members may know, I come from a State that represented a crossroads of different cultures and religions, where different civilizations lived for centuries in tolerance and mutual respect.

Today we are even more convinced that all problems can be solved only through dialogue based on good political will. From that position we have joined the fight against terrorism and organized crime of all kinds. We have heightened our struggle against corruption by upgrading and strengthening our State institutions. We have placed the rule of law at the top of the agenda. Good work has been done, results have been achieved and we have thus proved that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a no-man's land.

Building democratic institutions, economic development and the protection and promotion of human rights are more than ever at the top of our priorities. Following the recent tragic events and all the turbulent changes that Bosnia and Herzegovina has experienced, we strongly believe in the paradigm of democracy, development and peace as the pillars of progress and stability for my country, but also for the immediate neighbourhood and region as well. Only responsible and accountable governance can bring about necessary changes and progress for all.

Unfortunately, we are still confronted with the heavy legacy of the past, and especially with the fact that the main culprits for the crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, are at large. The moment they are brought to justice, it will be easier to reach our goals. That is why I would like at this juncture to emphasize the importance of cooperation by all sides concerned with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

At the same time we are aware that democratization is sometimes a long process. Post-conflict peace-building is even more complex. But, we have set the vision for developing a safe, peaceful, stable and self-sustainable country, and we shall not stop half way. Today, we are a full member of the Council of Europe. More refugees and displaced persons have returned in recent times as compared to any other post-war period. In other words, in the last 18 months almost three times more properties, homes and apartments were given back to refugees and displaced persons all over Bosnia and Herzegovina than in the previous five years. Many roads, many villages, many roofs were built or repaired; many mosques and churches have also been built or repaired.

The contribution of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), the Stabilization Force, the High Representative, the Peace Implementation Council, the Office of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and others in the family of the international community present in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been substantial in achieving the present level of stability and reconstruction.

We particularly recognize the value and the role of UNMIBH which is completing its mandate at the end of this year. The police reform and restructuring, with a view to meeting international standards of organizational capacity and institutional integrity, represents a clear success. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina was certainly one of the key players also in establishing the foundation for effective, democratic and sustainable law enforcement agencies, a fundamental element for the further development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multi-ethnic, tolerant and democratic State. We welcome the transfer of the remaining tasks in this area to the European Union Police Mission, and especially the extension of the European Union responsibility in the area of juridical reform as one of the basic pillars of self-sustainability, future democratization and the reform process.

There should be no doubt that the United Nations has the potential to fulfil its new tasks and thus respond to the ever increasing challenges of the fast-changing world. It should provide leadership in building a prosperous world, founded no longer on force and threats, but on the rules of international law and respect for all rights, and rights for all.

In that context I would like to underline that we support the further democratization and modernization of the United Nations. New tasks and challenges call increasing efficiency, cost rationalization and the equal geographic participation of States and peoples in the United Nations system. Bosnia and Herzegovina also supports the continuation of work on reforming the Security Council, adjusting its membership in accordance with carefully designed criteria, taking into account equal geographic representation but not jeopardizing the efficiency of that United Nations body.

Allow me to briefly mention some of the priorities of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina has in the past two years proved its determination to move from the position of passive aid recipient from the international community to the position of contributor to international efforts. The fact that we are in a position to consider the need or even the imperative of taking a more active and creative role, and thus a bigger share of responsibility, testifies to the trend of normalization of the situation in the country.

Reconstruction is taking place and results are visible in the economy, social reforms, education, health care and so on. Economic reforms are directed towards the establishment of a single economic space and also with a view to setting up conditions for upgraded education and thus to offering the choice for our young generations to remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina and become the frontrunners of its development and future.

We have almost fully completed the conditions set out in the European Union's road map, which we hope will soon open the process of a feasibility study for Bosnia and Herzegovina's signing of a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union. We have gone through the process of being the object of international efforts and are now the partner in the process of making an economically and institutionally self-sustainable State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is only one phase in a process of finally becoming the owner of the changes in our country.

In partnership with the international community, we are streamlining a common strategy for political stability, institution-building and an economic recovery programme as the precondition of overall sustainable development. The entire region, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, is entering a new stage of stability and the European integration process, but we still have to be on the alert. The ghosts of the past, segregation and wars are losing ground.

In following the trials of war criminals before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, we are bearing witness to the hope that justice and the future will finally bury projects based on genocide. That is why we have to act on a daily basis against those who are trying to open the box of drawing new maps or calling for new wars in the region.

So much energy and so many efforts of the local and international communities have been invested so far that we are not even allowed to consider anything but a strategy for success. Any type of hypothetical exit strategy of the international community can be based

only on a success strategy in building one multiethnic, democratic and European State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Once again, I would like to express the gratitude of my Government to the international community for its devoted support towards long-lasting stability and development in the region.

If the four million people of my country — Muslims, Orthodox Catholics, Jews and others who historically lived in tolerance, even in a non-democratic environment — cannot now live in a democratic and open society in the middle of Europe, then the logical question after 11 September is: How we can be consolidated and organized among the six billion people of our planet?

Coming from Bosnia and Herzegovina, I am driven by the force of optimism and the strength of vision shared by the overall majority of those who do not want to repeat the past, but are ready to fight for the future. Jobs, justice for all, solidarity and Europe, through reforms and strong state institutions, are the items on our agenda today. We are determined to turn these words into deeds.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya, His Excellency The Honourable Marsden Madoka, M.P.

Mr. Madoka (Kenya): Allow me to extend to Mr. Kavan, on behalf of my delegation, sincere congratulations on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh regular session.

May I also thank his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo, whose tenure of office coincided with one of the most trying periods in modern history following the 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States. We appreciate the excellent manner in which he handled the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. May I also commend the efforts, courage and vision of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who has continued to be a beacon of strength and hope. We salute him. In addition, we also wish to welcome Switzerland to the United Nations and look forward to the admission of East Timor.

Coming from a continent plagued with many obstacles, we believe that the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly affords us yet another opportunity to critically revisit the promises enumerated in the Millennium Declaration and to take stock of progress made so far. Two years down the line, we should give an account of our commitment to the Declaration. In many instances, I am afraid, we shall be found wanting. We have not lived up to our promises and, as a result, many in the world are more desperate today than they were two years ago. They had placed their hope in our vision, our sincerity, our commitment and our sense of urgency and purpose.

Various United Nations conferences and meetings have been held since the 1990s to address the challenges confronting developing countries. It is therefore regrettable that there has been insufficient political will to implement the decisions arising therefrom. Meagre resources have been committed to debt reduction, improving market access, human resource development and tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other diseases.

The current global financial framework has demonstrated its inadequacy in dealing with the problems facing developing countries. The decline in official development assistance flows and foreign direct investment is an issue of concern. Despite efforts made to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development, conditions in the international arena have not been adequately supportive. For a start, my delegation calls for greater emphasis to be placed on concessionary lending and greater use of grants.

Moreover, global trade arrangements have tended to benefit industrialized countries. Africa's present share of global trade is less than 2 per cent. While industrialized countries continue to provide substantial subsidies for their agricultural sector, developing countries have been forced to cease similar support. This, combined with tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, has meant that our products stand no chance of competing with the products from the North. We must therefore build on the momentum achieved at Doha as well as encourage initiatives, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act and the European Union/African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States trade arrangements, to enable our countries take advantage of the opportunities in international trade.

Many developing countries, including Kenya, are experiencing a net outflow of resources, mainly due to debt service obligations. As a result, there are fewer resources targeted towards basic social services, thus compounding the poverty situation. We therefore call

for an overhaul of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative eligibility criteria so that countries facing high levels of poverty and debt burden qualify for debt relief.

Mr. Panou (Togo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The launching of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) have rekindled great hopes in the African continent. These initiatives have made it clear that the primary responsibility for the development of Africa lies in the hands of the Africans themselves. The decision by the United Nations General Assembly to hold a high-level plenary meeting on NEPAD on 16 September 2002 recognizes the importance of that initiative, which emphasizes the twin principles of ownership and partnership.

Kenya calls for genuine partnership in the implementation of resolutions, commitments and, especially, the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus and the Outcome of the just concluded World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The special session of the General Assembly on children, held in May 2002, provided the international community with an opportunity to renew its commitment to the rights-based approach to children's programmes and activities. The Government of Kenya has made continued efforts to improve the welfare of children. Kenya has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and has signed the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Kenya has also ratified instruments prohibiting the involvement of children in armed conflict. A comprehensive Children's Statute was enacted in parliament and became operational on 1 March 2002. Kenya also has in place an early childhood development policy, safeguarding children from birth until the age of six.

My delegation notes with concern that the reduction in funding to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) by a major contributor will have a negative impact on ongoing programmes in many developing countries. The UNFPA continues to play a critical role in assisting the most vulnerable in society — namely, women and adolescents. It is our hope that voluntary contributions to the organization will be restored to their former level and further increased as a matter of urgency.

With regard to the United Nations Centre in Nairobi, my delegation welcomes the improvement in the level of utilization of the conference facilities. We encourage the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure that all meetings and activities on environment and matters related to human settlements are held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) so as to utilize the excellent facilities there and to further strengthen the role of the Organization in all matters charged to it in conformity with the headquarters rule.

My delegation would like to commend the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly for elevating the Commission on Human Settlements to a fully fledged programme now known as the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) to be its secretariat. We have no doubt that the upgrading will facilitate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium.

The Secretary-General's programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 shows that the activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat continue to depend heavily on extrabudgetary resources. This has severely constrained the ability of both organizations to play their roles effectively due to an unpredictable financial resource base and under-provision. We urge the Secretary-General to ensure stability and predictability in funding UNEP and UN-Habitat through the United Nations regular budget.

My delegation would like to congratulate the newly appointed High Commissioner for Human Rights, His Excellency Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello. We would like to assure him of our full cooperation, and we look forward to working very closely with him. At the same time, we wish to pay tribute to the outgoing High Commissioner, Her Excellency Mrs. Mary Robinson, for her able leadership.

Kenya wishes to underscore the importance of treating human rights issues in a balanced manner. This very Assembly has consistently reaffirmed:

> "that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and that the international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same

footing and with the same emphasis". (*resolution 56/165, seventh preambular paragraph*)

I am afraid that this has not always been so.

There is a genuine concern that too much emphasis has been given to political rights at the expense of economic and social rights, such as the right to development. These are vital issues that the international community can no longer afford to take lightly as it endeavours to eliminate hunger and poverty and ensure a just standard of living for all people.

Kenya holds the view that the General Assembly should play a leading role in spearheading development initiatives as envisaged in the Charter. We welcome the progress already made in the reorganization and revitalization of the General Assembly. This organ should now reclaim its leadership role in focusing and shaping debate on issues of global interest.

On issues of world security, Kenya has a long record of participation in peacekeeping operations. Today, Kenya is the sixth largest troop contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world. We are particularly happy to be associated with the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and on the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Greater emphasis should be put on the deployment of adequate force levels to missions in Africa. In particular, we would like to see greater support in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Africa is a continent ravaged by conflicts and instability. However, the recent progress in the resolution of some of these conflicts is very encouraging. In particular, the signing of a protocol between the Government of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Machakos, Kenya on 20 July 2002 was a very welcome development. Other positive developments towards lasting peace in Africa include the signing of an agreement between the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Rwandese Republic, the holding of peaceful elections in Sierra Leone after years of bitter civil war, and continuing efforts towards reconciliation of the warring factions in Somalia. We also welcome the recent positive developments in Angola. Kenya will continue with its mediation efforts in the region and in the continent as a whole.

On the important question of reform of the Security Council, Kenya calls for the speedy conclusion of negotiations aimed at equitable representation and an increase in membership in the Security Council. With the establishment of the Peace and Security Council as an important organ of the new African Union, Africa must now play its rightful role in matters of international peace and security. It is time Africa was accorded the elevated status it deserves in the Security Council.

Kenya believes in the rule of law and will support all genuine efforts to this end. We subscribe to peaceful settlement of disputes through regional efforts, the International Tribunals and the International Court of Justice. Kenya fully supports the historic milestone of the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998 and its entry into force on 1 July 2002. Impunity for serious war crimes is indeed a denial of justice, which must be brought to an end.

In 2001, we witnessed the most devastating form of international terrorism' in the multiple terrorist attacks of 11 September. As a country that faced a similar attack in 1998, Kenya strongly believes that terrorism can never be justified under any circumstances. We fully support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) and have already ratified the 12 anti-terrorism conventions. The process of domesticating them is already under way.

In conclusion, Kenya looks forward to greater commitment to build a secure and more prosperous world for all. The destiny of mankind is inextricably intertwined in spite of national boundaries. Events in the global arena have clearly demonstrated that the effects of ignorance, poverty, disease and insecurity in one region or another country can impact negatively on the well-being of the rest of the world. Let us get together and build a world where all can live in peace and prosperity.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on Her Excellency The Honourable Lilian Patel, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Malawi.

Ms. Patel (Malawi): On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Malawi and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate President Kavan most warmly on his unanimous election as President of the fifty-seventh regular session of the General Assembly. I am confident that under his able

leadership, buttressed by a pragmatic approach to the proceedings of the session, we will be able to further consolidate past gains on a variety of issues, and also mobilize renewed international resolve and political will to reinvigorate our continued search for viable responses and solutions to the many pressing challenges that threaten the very survival of humankind.

I take this opportunity also to pay special tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Han Seung-soo of the Republic of Korea, for the able manner in which he handled the work of the General Assembly during his tenure of office.

Further, I would like to register my country's vote of thanks for and special recognition of the invaluable contribution made by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, in injecting fresh impetus and a sharper sense of purpose and direction into the work of the United Nations. His informative and insightful annual reports on the work of the United Nations clearly point to an organization that is moving in the direction that it should and is much more focused on the quest for accelerated growth and socio-economic progress of the disadvantaged poor nations.

A number of developments have taken place around the world since the last general debate. While some of these are relatively positive and are, thus far, a cause for optimism, yet others, a majority, are, at best, disheartening and tend to cast a long shadow on prospects for long term progress, especially in our part of the world.

As I speak now, for example, six southern Africa countries, including Malawi, are in the throes of a severe and life-threatening food crisis brought on by drought-related deficits in grain harvests. Up to 13 million people in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe are facing severe food shortage, which has already given rise to a threat of widespread famine and a rise in famine-related health problems. What we are clearly seeing here is a further deterioration in the general poverty situation and the humanitarian plight of the rural masses in these countries. Chances of the food insecurity translating into a serious region-wide security and health catastrophe cannot be over-emphasized, especially given that southern Africa is already the epicentre of the global implosion caused by HIV/AIDS. The current food crisis in the sub-region stands out as the severest in many years. It is poised to inflict incalculable damage on the social, economic and cultural fabric of whole communities, and it endangers the efficacy of the financial and economic sustainability of the institutional and public policy frameworks for sustainable development currently under implementation.

Indeed, southern Africa is facing uniquely different multifaceted humanitarian crises arising not only from civil wars, but also from social and economic factors and other natural disasters. The crisis is certain to roll back numerous past gains in many sectors, particularly because of the centrality of agricultural production to the gross domestic product and rural employment of most of the affected countries.

The food shortage has placed further serious strains on the already low revenue collection capacities of the affected countries, especially to the extent that budgetary allocations are having to be appropriated from critical social sector services to fund massive grain imports necessary to supplement inadequate local grain stocks, thereby financially starving other equally urgent sectoral needs. Sadly, however, the next harvest, due in eight months, may not hold much promise either, unless the drought cycle, which is the major contributing factor, does not recur.

Initially, Malawi faced a grain deficit of 600,000 tons caused by two years of a paradoxical combination of drought and devastating torrential rains and floods. This tonnage was urgently required to stave off a rapidly deteriorating famine situation that is expected to affect 3.2 million people. The President, His Excellency Dr. Bakili Muluzi, declared the current food shortages a national disaster on 28 February 2002, and a vigorous national appeal for emergency relief has been under way since then.

The response to this appeal by the donor community, both local and international, has been very encouraging. On behalf of the Government of Malawi, I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to the local and international humanitarian organizations and Governments, such as those of the European Union, the Governments of Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and other friendly Governments, which together have financed nearly 75 per cent of the emergency relief supplies received so far in Malawi. We also wish to thank the United Nations funds and programmes for

their timely assistance, in particular the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), as well as resident United Nations agencies, for providing relief coordination and procurement services during this critical hour of need.

In a special way, and on behalf of the six Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries affected by the famine, the Government of Malawi wishes to thank the Secretary-General and the United Nations family for successfully organizing the Consolidated National Appeals for the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa, which took place on 18 July 2002, here at United Nations Headquarters. We are grateful for the outcome of the appeal, and we would like to extend similar sentiments of appreciation to all Governments and donor organizations that made pledges and commitments towards the funding requirements of the appeal.

In addition, we welcome and applaud the Secretary-General's timely appointment of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, Mr. James Morris, as his Special Envoy for the southern African humanitarian crisis. Mr. Morris's personal meetings and consultations with the Heads of State and Government of the six southern African countries and his tour of the subregion have led to useful high-level exchanges that will form an important basis for tackling the problem of food insecurity in future. We undertake to work with him and give him all the support and cooperation necessary for the fulfilment of his mandate.

The high levels of poverty and the deepening scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other transmissible diseases afflicting our people continue to ravage populations in the developing countries, particularly those of Africa. We take no relief from the annual reports for the year 2002 released by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Health Organization, whose graphic statistical data and hard facts portray an unabating, vicious and complex interplay between structural poverty and a startlingly high HIV/AIDS prevalence in poor countries. The resulting humanitarian crisis threatens millions more lives over the next few years.

As home to one of the largest numbers of victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the world, southern Africa needs closer attention and concrete actions, as well as deeper resource commitments by the international community, to help build sustainable capacity to address the critical poverty issues and excessive mortality from HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. These are extremely sensitive issues, and the international donor community should consider, on an emergency basis, the difficult moral issues and the choices involved.

It is extremely troubling that some Member States and donor institutions have suddenly taken a minimalist approach to the central role played by United Nations funds and programmes in tackling health problems in the developing countries. It is needless to remind this Assembly that the work of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS is very crucial. We call upon donors and multinational institutions to reconsider their decision and to restore funding to UNFPA.

Further, we call upon multilateral donor institutions and industrialized countries to grant deeper debt relief and forgiveness. Transnational organizations, which extract huge profits from their business operations in poor countries, have the moral responsibility to invest in HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support and treatment. International pharmaceutical corporations, too, ought to show more compassion by expanding access to antiretroviral drugs and other life-sustaining medicines, including meaningful concessions on price reduction and voluntary donations. We note with gratitude the positive steps taken by some pharmaceutical companies in that direction.

My Government acknowledges the important role played by the United Nations in mobilizing support and resources for the development process in the poor countries. It is not enough, however, to hold one conference after another without effective follow-up and implementation mechanisms. There is therefore a need for supportive global processes that would ensure shorter time lags between the adoption of programmes of action and their implementation.

It is our hope that the establishment of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed

Countries in the United Nations Secretariat will promote regular consultations and closer follow-up of agreed programmes of action to ensure their fulfilment. Such programmes of action include the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the International Conference on Financing for Development and other commitments flowing from the recent General Assembly special sessions on HIV/AIDS and children. An earnest attempt is necessary to link up the commitments and agreed outcomes of the Brussels Programme of Action and the Monterrey Consensus in order to create a rich resource base for the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Action for sustainable development.

Other major problems and challenges that are faced by poor countries and stifle their progress have previously been extensively covered and debated in the Assembly and in various other international forums. But some of them need to be mentioned again. The transition of poor countries from continued dependence on international charity to self-reliance is contingent on certain factors such as free and open trade. Agricultural and other commodities from developing countries need to gain access to Western markets without unnecessary barriers. It is ironic and morally unacceptable that products from the West are freely offloaded onto our markets but not the other way round. Fair trade is a two-way transaction, and every endeavour must be made to ensure that it remains so.

On an optimistic note, we welcome the commendable progress that has been achieved in an effort to bring some conflicts in Africa to resolution. This engenders the hope for the eventual restoration of stability and a chance for decisive peace on the continent. The ceasefire agreement reached on 4 April this year in Angola and the peace agreement signed on 30 July between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo represent notable historic milestones in bringing to an end the conflicts in the Great Lakes region. I am confident that the United Nations will use that opening to step forward, as it always has, to strengthen its involvement and that of the international community to consolidate those agreements and closely monitor their implementation.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the people and the Government of East Timor on their attainment of independence after many decades of dehumanizing subjugation. My Government also welcomes East Timor's coming membership in the United Nations.

In the same vein, I congratulate Switzerland on its admission to the membership of the United Nations. The significance of this historic development to the world body cannot be over-emphasized, especially given the invaluable contribution the Government and people of Switzerland have made over the years to the progressive development of international humanitarian and human rights affairs.

My Government is concerned at the unrelenting bloodletting in the Middle East, particularly the senseless carnage among innocent civilians. We encourage both the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to give peace a chance through dialogue. We call, in particular, for the cessation of hostilities, provocation and incitement, which only serve to inflame the delicate conflict situation.

Malawi believes in the principle of universality of human rights. One of the basic rights that every member of the global community can expect to enjoy is the right to freedom of association. It is on the basis of that, and in a spirit of reconciliation, that Malawi believes that the United Nations should seriously reconsider the question of the readmission of the Republic of China. The more than 21 million people of Taiwan should be allowed to freely participate in the affairs of the United Nations without any hindrance, as that is what this Organization stands for. After all, Taiwan, through its rapid growth in the economic, political and social sectors has demonstrated that it has a lot to offer for the good of humanity through the United Nations.

Africa is on the threshold of a new beginning aimed at making a lasting clean break with the errors and political missteps of the last five decades. The promulgation of a development blueprint, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), provides a very comprehensive, clear focused road map for economic revitalization of the African continent. NEPAD, as a framework for development, contains broad-ranging measures and actions that are reflective of a new vision for long-term development requirements, as well as constructive and beneficial participation in regional, international and other multilateral processes for effective integration of Africa into the global political and economic order.

It is gratifying, therefore, that the international community is willing to support this newly emerging pragmatic framework for partnership and ownership of development on the continent. I would like, once again, to encourage our development partners to join in and support Africa's new quest for economic recovery and sustainable development.

In conclusion, Malawi, along with other African countries, would like to express deep gratitude to the leaders of the Group of 8 countries for voicing unequivocal support for NEPAD. We are thankful for the creation of the Group of 8 Africa Action Plan adopted at the recent Summit in Kananaskis in Canada, which will operate as the platform for enhanced cooperation and partnership between Africa and the industrialized Group of 8 countries. We are confident that strong international networking and support for NEPAD will provide a solid basis for growth and progress, as well as decisive peace and political stability in Africa.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now call on His excellency Mr. Osborne Riviere, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Mr. Riviere (Dominica): The Commonwealth of Dominica joins other delegations in congratulating you on your election to chair the proceedings of the fifty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that you will preside over this Assembly with the efficiency and dedication required to take us through the agenda of the fifty-seventh session.

We also take this opportunity to extend to your predecessor our sincere appreciation for the excellent manner in which he steered the work of the fifty-sixth session of this General Assembly.

One year ago we convened in a city reeling from a terrible tragedy which spurred the international community to unite in the fight against international terrorism. The world's response to the events of 11 September 2001 was one of total condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and a firm undertaking to uphold the principles of freedom and democracy enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The United Nations Security Council was swift and decisive in its adoption of a resolution focused on suppressing the financing of terrorism and denying terrorists any safe haven in which to operate. Sadly, terrorism remains today one of the greatest threats to human security. The Commonwealth of Dominica therefore once again reaffirms its commitment to the fight against international terrorism and to ensuring that the channels for funding of terrorist-related activities and international crime are permanently disabled.

My Government is making every effort towards the successful implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) in spite of limited human and financial resources. Legislative measures which have been put in place include an Exchange of Information Act, which addresses some of the concerns of the international community as expressed in resolution 1373 (2001). This Act was passed in the Dominica Parliament in January 2002, while a bill for the suppression of financing of terrorism will be tabled before Parliament shortly.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its appreciation for the initiatives taken by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Commonwealth, the European Union and other countries and organizations to assist developing countries in their implementation of resolution 1373 (2001).

The historic entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) takes us one step further in the fight against impunity of war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Commonwealth of Dominica's accession to the Statute of the ICC in January 2001 is indicative of our support for the establishment of a permanent international court that will bring the perpetrators of the most serious international crimes to justice. In this regard, the ICC must seek to prevent or penalize terrorist-related crimes which may be localized in action, but may have severe global consequences.

The international situation, notably developments in the world economy, has not been favourable to the growth prospects of small States such as the Commonwealth of Dominica, which remains a small, open and largely agriculture-based economy, extremely vulnerable to external economic shocks. While the events of 11 September 2001 are behind us, the irreparable damage to the economies of small Caribbean countries is still evident. Hardest hit was the tourism sector, one of the areas with the greatest potential to contribute to Dominica's social and economic development.

The growth of our offshore financial sector, another potential contributor to our economic diversification, has been adversely affected by our country's inclusion in the list of non-cooperative countries and territories put out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Financial Action Task Force. All attempts thus far to have our country removed from that list have proved futile, in spite of the implementation of the measures necessary to ensure best industry practices in the financial services sector.

The Commonwealth of Dominica nevertheless commits itself to the global combat against money-laundering and stands ready to cooperate with the international community in its anti-money-laundering initiative. A number of new laws have been enacted by Parliament to legislate its anti-money-laundering policies. The Commonwealth of Dominica has also established a Financial Intelligence Unit and a Money-Laundering Supervisory Authority to ensure that our financial-services sector remains free from money-laundering.

As I address you, my country is facing one of the most challenging periods in its history. The slowdown in the global economy, the impact of the events of 11 September 2001 on an already deteriorating fiscal situation, the continued difficulties of integrating into the multilateral trading system in a globalized world and the rapid decline in overseas development assistance have undoubtedly affected our economic performance in an appallingly negative way.

We have been left with no other option but to pursue a stabilization and adjustment programme, which, although approved by the International Monetary Fund, has not succeeded in keeping detractors, including the public service union, off the streets.

The success of this programme should lay the basis for sustained higher growth output and employment, as well as poverty reduction. We recognize, however, the attendant costs of implementing this programme. The Dominican people have been asked to make temporary, but heavy sacrifices in order to place our country on the road to recovery.

We wish to recognize, in this forum, the support given in these difficult times to the Commonwealth of Dominica at the Caribbean regional level, and look forward to the timely support of the international community.

Last year, as the world turned its attention to the events of 11 September, the Secretary-General reminded us that none of the issues that faced us on 10 September had become less urgent. Indeed, the United Nations calendar for the past year has been crowded with special conferences and summits, all convened to address problems and issues of global concern that affect the everyday lives of the peoples of the United Nations. While it is true that those issues are current and of interest to the smaller members of this body it is unfortunate that many of us do not have the capacity or wherewithal to ensure that they receive effective representation, not only at the conferences but, more significantly, in the preparatory committees that precede the conferences. It is no accident, therefore, that most often the States that least benefit are the smallest and least influential.

The Second World Assembly on Ageing and the special session on children attempted to deal with issues which affect the most vulnerable members of our societies. The World Assembly concluded in April with a Plan of Action for implementation by the international community. In small countries like the Commonwealth of Dominica, this implementation must, of necessity, include the recognition of older persons as the pillars of our societies — people who make a significant contribution to our economic development.

My Government has developed a national policy on ageing which seeks to ensure that older persons are provided with protective care and given an opportunity to continue to participate in the development of our nation. A few weeks ago, we were privileged to host the tenth annual regional meeting of HelpAge International — a happy coincidence, given that among our population of 75,000, we have 22 centenarians. I want to make specific mention of the world's oldest living person — a Dominican woman, Mrs. Elizabeth Israel, affectionately known as Ma Pampo — who is allegedly 127.

Civil society organizations like HelpAge must be recognized for their vigorous attempts to deal with issues affecting older persons. As a family of nations, we established set goals, strategies and actions in pursuit of a better life for children at the special session of the General Assembly on children. As a

signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Commonwealth of Dominica remains committed to ensuring that children's rights are protected and respected. Children are one of our most valuable resources.

The Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development was convened in March this year, and was hailed as a "turning point in the approach to development cooperation" by the international community. It was widely acknowledged at Monterrey that, in order for development assistance to be effective, both the donors and the recipients had to share the same goals of sustainable development and the alleviation and eventual eradication of poverty.

We applaud the commitment expressed by the major donor Governments to the Monterrey Consensus. What we desire, however, is an equitable distribution of the increased official development assistance funds pledged by the heads of State or Government of the European Union in March 2002. The same can be said of the "new compact for global development" proposed by President George W. Bush on 14 March 2002, by which the United States pledged to increase its core assistance to developing countries by 50 per cent over the next three years.

We are still confident that global conferences can work, because it has been proved that they serve as forums where new proposals can be debated and consensus sought on topical issues. At the recently concluded Johannesburg Summit, world Governments agreed to halve by 2015 the number of people lacking clean water and basic sanitation.

My Government was particularly pleased that at the conclusion of the Johannesburg Summit the richer countries stated their willingness to reach an agreement, by January 2005, within the World Trade Organization, for "substantial improvements in market access" for food exports from developing countries.

The Johannesburg Summit underlined the necessary linkage between environmental protection and natural resources management and the issues of poverty, underdevelopment and social justice. The Summit demonstrated the interdependence of social, environmental and economic factors, which must work in unison if long-term sustainable development is to be achieved. Empirical evidence exists to show that poor and weak national economies impact negatively on the environment, while environmental degradation and the over-utilization of natural resources result in declining economies and impoverished communities.

The Government of Dominica remains fully committed to Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States. We reiterate our unwavering support for the Johannesburg Plan of Action and urge all Member States to make good on their commitments for the successful implementation of all sustainable development conventions.

The increase in levels of official development assistance, to which I alluded earlier, is essential when viewed in the context of the implementation of development strategies by small island developing States. It is recognized that the small, open economies of these small States require effective means, including financial resources, to counteract the negative effects of globalization and trade liberalization and to foster sustainable development.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is acutely aware of the magnitude of the challenges facing our pursuit of sustainable development. Ours is a country with a history of consistently seeking a national development path guided by sustainable development. An integrated development plan, undertaken with the participation of a diversity of stakeholders and sectors, will shortly be completed and will provide us with a framework within which we can address physical, economic and social vulnerabilities in an integrated manner.

At this time, my Government wishes to place on record its appreciation of the continued commitment of the Republic of China on Taiwan to the social, economic and infrastructural development of small, vulnerable economies very much like its own. As the fourteenth largest economy in the world, the Republic of China on Taiwan has demonstrated the benefits of having a global perspective on development. We welcomed the decision of the World Trade Organization, in November 2001, to admit the Republic of China on Taiwan as a full member of that organization. We look forward to a similar occasion when the Republic of China on Taiwan will take its place in these halls as a full member of the United Nations family.

The Commonwealth of Dominica joins other delegations in congratulating the African nations for two important developments. First, the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into the African

Union, which we are confident will be a strong institution committed to the promotion of peace and stability, democracy and human rights, cooperation, development, prosperity and human dignity. Second, we have the programme for socio-economic revitalization of the African continent, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The United Nations has a central role to play in ensuring the success of this bold initiative of the African States to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment. These two development provide great examples that our Caribbean region can emulate.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the resolve of the Millennium Declaration that

> "the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people." *(A/54/2000, para. 5)*

We must ensure, through the global and regional programmes, that globalization truly contributes to sustainable development and prosperity for all. We wish the 57th General Assembly every success in advancing the goals of peace, democracy, prosperity and sustainable development.

The President: We have heard the last speaker inscribed for this afternoon's meeting. But I wish to point out that a representative has requested to exercise his right of reply. I now call on the representative of Spain.

Mr. Flores (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, in his statement, made reference to the Spanish cities of Sebta and Melilla, as well as to other Spanish territories. In the framework of the relations of friendship and good neighbourliness between Spain and Morocco, based on mutual respect and a shared history, I wish to underscore that Sebta and Melilla, as well as the adjacent islands and rocks, are an integral part of the territory of Spain, and those citizens are represented in the Spanish Parliament, with the same rights and the same conditions as their compatriots, enjoying the same rights and freedoms, and protected by the same legal order.

The meeting rose at 6.35 p.m.